

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Previously Presented) A game apparatus, having connected thereto an operation mechanism with which a player operates a character, the game apparatus outputting to a display a game screen containing characters which are operable with the operation mechanism, comprising:

at least one map storage location for storing map data based on which to display a game space;

at least one character storage location for storing data of a first character and a second character which are operable by players;

an operation detecting mechanism for detecting an operation made to the operation mechanism;

a character switching mechanism for switching an operable character by the operation mechanism when a predetermined condition is satisfied;

a first character operation controlling mechanism for controlling the first character in accordance with the operation made to the operation mechanism, when the character switching mechanism selects the first character to be the operable character;

a first game screen output mechanism for outputting a first game screen representing a broad extent of the game space containing the first character and the second character, based on the map data in the at least one map storage location and the data in the at least one character storage location, when the first character operation controlling mechanism controls the first character;

a second character operation controlling mechanism for controlling the second character in accordance with the operation made to the operation mechanism, when the character switching mechanism selects the second character to be the operable character, ; and

a second game screen output mechanism for outputting a second game screen representing a narrow extent of the game space containing the second character, based on the map data in the at least one map storage location and the data in the at least one character storage location, when the second character operation controlling mechanism controls the second character.

2. (Previously Presented) The game apparatus according to claim 1, wherein,
the operation mechanism comprises:

a first operation mechanism to be used by a first player; and

a second operation mechanism to be used by a second player distinct from the first player,

the display comprises:

a first display for displaying a personal screen to be viewed by only one player; and

a second display for displaying a common screen to be viewed by all participating players,

the character switching mechanism switches the operable character for the first player and the operable character for the second player when the predetermined condition is satisfied,

the first game screen output mechanism outputs the first game screen to the first display,
and

the second game screen output mechanism outputs the second game screen to the second display.

3. (Previously Presented) The game apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the first operation mechanism comprises a hand-held type game apparatus including the first display and a manipulable element with which to operate the first character.

4. (Previously Presented) The game apparatus according to claim 3, further comprising a plurality of second operation mechanisms to be operated by a plurality of second players, wherein the second game screen output mechanism outputs to the second display a plurality of second game screens for the respective second characters operable with the plurality of second operation mechanisms, the plurality of second game screens not overlapping one another.

5. (Previously Presented) The game apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a residual image displaying control mechanism for displaying, after the first character has passed through the second game screen, a residual image along a trajectory of the first character for a predetermined period of time.

6. (Previously Presented) The game apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a display region changing mechanism for changing, for a predetermined period of time after a certain condition is satisfied, the second game screen so as to represent a broader extent of the game space encompassing the relatively narrow extent containing the second character.

7. (Previously Presented) The game apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising:
score storage locations including a first score storage area and a second score storage area;

a table generation/update mechanism for generating table data for making associations between the first score storage area, the first player, and the operable character for the first player, and making associations between the second score storage area, the second player, and the operable character for the second player, and for updating the associations when the character switching mechanism switches the operable characters;

a score adding mechanism for cumulatively adding points each time the first character scores points; and

a score writing mechanism for writing the points added by the score adding mechanism to the first score storage area, by referring to the table data, when the first player is associated with the first character, and writing the points added by the score adding mechanism to the second score storage area when the second player is associated with the first character.

8. (Previously Presented) The game apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the second game screen output mechanism outputs a screen for displaying only a position of the second character in the entire game space to the second display, the screen being displayed together with the second game screen.

9. (Previously Presented) A recording medium having recorded thereon a game program to be executed by a computer in a game apparatus having connected thereto operation

mechanisms with which a player operates a character, the game program causing the game apparatus to output to a display a game screen containing characters which are operable with the operation mechanisms, and causing the computer to function as:

at least one map storage location for storing map data based on which to display a game space;

at least one character storage location for storing data of a first character and a second character which are operable by players;

an operation detecting mechanism for detecting an operation made to the operation mechanism ;

a character switching mechanism for switching an operable character by the operation mechanism when a predetermined condition is satisfied;

a first character operation controlling mechanism for controlling the first character in accordance with an operation made to the operation mechanism, when the character switching selects the first character to be the operable character;

a first game screen output mechanism for outputting a first game screen representing a broad extent of the game space containing the first character and the second character, based on the map data in the at least one map storage location and the data in the at least one character storage location, when the first character operation controlling mechanism controls the first character;

a second character operation controlling mechanism for controlling the second character in accordance with an operation made to the operation mechanism, when the character switching selects the second character to be the operable character; and

a second game screen output mechanism for outputting a second game screen representing a narrow extent of the game space containing the second character, based on the map data in the map storage and the data in the character storage, when the second character operation controlling mechanism controls the second character.

10. (Previously Presented) The recording medium according to claim 9, wherein, the operation mechanism comprises:

- a first operation mechanism to be used by a first player; and
- a second operation mechanism to be used by a second player distinct from the first player,

the display comprises:

- a first display for displaying a personal screen to be viewed by only one player; and
- a second display for displaying a common screen to be viewed by all participating players, and

the game program causes the computer to function so that:

- the character switching mechanism switches the operable character for the first player and the operable character for the second player when the predetermined condition is satisfied;
- the first game screen output mechanism outputs the first game screen to the first display;

and

- the second game screen output mechanism outputs the second game screen to the second display.

11. (Previously Presented) The recording medium according to claim 10,

wherein,

the first operation mechanism comprises a hand-held type game apparatus including the first display and a manipulable element with which to operate the first character, and

the game program causes the computer to function so that the first game screen output mechanism outputs the first game screen to the first display of the hand-held type game apparatus.

12. (Previously Presented) The recording medium according to claim 11, wherein the game apparatus further comprises a plurality of second operation mechanisms to be operated by a plurality of second players,

wherein the game program causes the computer to function so that the second game screen output mechanism outputs to the second display a plurality of second game screens for the respective second characters operable with the plurality of second operation mechanisms, the plurality of second game screens not overlapping one another.

13. (Previously Presented) The recording medium according to claim 9, wherein the game program causes the computer to further function as a residual image displaying control mechanism for displaying, after the first character has passed through the second game screen, a residual image along a trajectory of the first character for a predetermined period of time.

14. (Previously Presented) The recording medium according to claim 9, wherein the game program causes the computer to further function as a display region changing mechanism for changing, for a predetermined period of time after a certain condition is satisfied, the second

game screen so as to represent a broader extent of the game space encompassing the narrow extent containing the second character.

15. (Previously Presented) The recording medium according to claim 10, wherein the game program causes the computer to further function as:

score storage locations including a first score storage area and a second score storage area;

a table generation/update mechanism for generating table data for making associations between the first score storage area, the first player, and the operable character for the first player, and for making associations between the second score storage area, the second player, and the operable character for the second player, and for updating the associations when the character switching mechanism switches the operable characters;

a score adding mechanism cumulatively adding points each time the first character scores points; and

a score writing mechanism for writing the points added by the score adding mechanism to the first score storage area when the first player is associated with the first character, and writing the points added by the score adding mechanism to the second score storage area when the second player is associated with the first character, by referring to the table data.

16. (Previously Presented) The recording medium according to claim 10, wherein the game program causes the computer to function so that the second game screen output mechanism outputs a screen for displaying only a position of the second character in the entire game space to the second display, the screen being displayed together with the second game screen.

17. (Previously Presented) A game system for playing a network game comprising a plurality of terminal devices coupled to a network, each terminal device including:

an operation mechanism with which a player operates a character;

at least one map storage location for storing map data based on which to display a game space;

at least one character storage location for storing data of a first character and a second character which are operable by players;

an operation detecting mechanism for detecting an operation made to the operation mechanism;

a character switching mechanism for switching an operable character by the operation mechanism when a predetermined condition is satisfied;

a first character operation controlling mechanism for controlling the first character in accordance with the operation made to the operation mechanism, when the character switching mechanism selects the first character to be the operable character;

a first game screen output mechanism for outputting a first game screen representing a broad extent of the game space containing the first character and the second character, based on the map data in the map storage and the data in the character storage, when the first character operation controlling mechanism controls the first character;

a second character operation controlling mechanism for controlling the second character in accordance with the operation made to the operation mechanism, when the character switching mechanism selects the second character to be the operable character; and

a second game screen output mechanism for outputting a second game screen representing a narrow extent of the game space containing the second character, based on the map data in the map storage and the data in the character storage, when the second character operation controlling mechanism controls the second character.

18. (Previously Presented) A game system comprising: at least one hand-held type game apparatus having a display section and an operation section operable by a player; a plurality of operation mechanisms which are operable by players; a game apparatus for outputting a game screen in which to display characters which are operated within a game space respectively by the operation section of the hand-held type game apparatus and the plurality of operation mechanisms; and a display for displaying an image based on the output game screen,

wherein,

the game apparatus includes:

at least one map storage location for storing map data based on which to display the game space;

at least one character storage location for storing data of a first character and a second character which are operable by players;

a first character operation controlling mechanism for controlling the first character in accordance with an operation made to the operation section of the hand-held type game apparatus;

a second character operation controlling mechanism for controlling the second character in accordance with an operation made to the operation mechanism;

a first game screen output mechanism for outputting to the hand-held type game apparatus a first game screen representing a broad extent of the game space containing at least the first character and the second character, based on the map data in the map storage and the data in the character storage; and

a second game screen output mechanism for outputting to the display a second game screen representing a narrow extent of the game space containing the second character, based on the map data in the at least one map storage location and the data in the at least one character storage location,

the display section of the hand-held type game apparatus displaying the first game screen which is output from the first game screen output, and

the display displaying the second game screen which is output from the second game screen output.

19. (Previously Presented) A method for displaying viewing perspectives of a plurality of game characters comprising:

displaying a first broad viewing perspective of a first character on a first display device contained in a hand-held game machine, and

displaying a plurality of narrow viewing perspectives of a plurality of additional characters on a second display.

20. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 19 wherein the step of displaying a plurality of narrow viewing perspectives further includes the step of displaying a limited view of the game space containing the additional character.

21. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 19 wherein step of displaying a first broad viewing perspective of the first character further includes the step of displaying a substantial view of the game space containing the first character and the plurality of additional characters.

22. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 20 wherein the narrow viewing perspective of the additional character can, upon the occurrence of a pre-specified event, be temporarily broadened to include a less limited view of the game space containing the additional character.

23. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 19 wherein the step of displaying a broad viewing perspective of a first character on a display contained in a hand-held game machine further comprises the steps of:

transmitting key data to a game device,
receiving coordinate data from the game device,
updating character positions in a game space based on the received coordinate data,
generating a first game screen based on the updated game space, and
displaying the first game screen on the display of the hand-held game machine.

24. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 19 wherein the step of displaying a plurality of narrow viewing perspectives on a second display device further comprises the steps of:

checking for the occurrence of a pre-specified event that would allow a character obtaining a special item to temporarily view a broader perspective,
generating a game screen depicting a plurality of additional characters,
generating a position screen containing the relative positions of game characters,
combining the game screens of the plurality of additional characters and the position screen, and
displaying the combined screen on a single display device connected to a game machine.